Tahoe Mountain Bike Patrol ready to train new members

The Tahoe Mountain Bike Patrol is accepting new members who attend the joint Bike Patrol/Trail Ambassador training weekend on June 9-10.

The volunteer patrollers provide directions, education, assistance and medical response to all trail users.

Based out of Spooner Lake, the patrol covers all bike-legal sections of the Tahoe Rim Trail through an agreement with the TRTA and is in the process of penning an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to include other trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

This is one of the largest chapter's in the country of IMBA's National Mountain Bike Patrol program.

U.S. farmers helping China increase food production

By P.J. Huffstutter and Niu Shuping, Reuters

Inside a dimly lit barn in northeast Indiana, where the air smells faintly of corn and earth, the future of China's food supply is squealing for attention.

A farmhand shuffles through the crowd of pigs inside pen 7E3, patting their fleshy pink backs and checking their water trough. The animals here at the Whiteshire Hamroc farm have been bred for one purpose: to be flown halfway around the

world, on a journey fueled by China’s appetite for food independence.

In a country where pork is a culinary staple, the demand for a protein-rich diet is growing faster than Chinese farmers can keep up. While Americans cut back on meat consumption to the lowest levels seen in two decades, the Chinese now eat nearly 10 percent more meat than they did five years ago.

China’s solution: to super-size its supply by snapping up millions of live animals raised by U.S. farmers as breeding stock – capitalizing on decades of cutting edge agricultural research in America.

By taking this step, say breeders and exporters, China will move from small-scale backyard farms, to the Westernized tradition of large consolidated operations to keep up with demand.

“I liken it to their telephone system,” said Mike Lemmon, co-owner of the Whiteshire Hamroc farm, which specializes in exporting breeding swine to China. “Most of China’s mainland went from having no landlines to everyone having a cell phone. They’re doing the same thing with farming.”

Focus on livestock genetics also represents an emerging economic bonanza for two of the United States’ most powerful industries: technology and agriculture. Worldwide, the United States exported a record $664 million worth of breeding stock and genetic material such as semen in 2011.

But as fortune shines on breeders, concerns are being raised. While U.S. consumption of meat falls, the price of producing a pound of protein rises, meaning meat companies are seeing their margins shrink.

Read the whole story

Truckee crews expect road to reopen Thursday

Cold Stream Road in Truckee, which has been closed since April 23, is expected to open Thursday.

Construction crews have completed the bulk of the backfill of the undermined roadway adjacent to the culvert. Crews on Wednesday continued repair work on either side of the roadway to prevent the roadway edges from collapsing.

Paving of the roadway is scheduled for April 27. During the paving operation the road will be open with alternating one-way traffic.

Rain to stay in basin through Thursday

A wind advisory for Lake Tahoe is in effect until 11 Wednesday night.

Gusts of 30mph and sustained winds of up to 20mph are forecast to bring waves of 1 to 3 feet.



Rain in Incline on April 25 does not stop these two from practicing their drives. Photo/LTN

Rain has been intermittent throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin on April 25. As temperatures drop, that precipitation is likely to change to snow on Thursday – especially at locations above 8,000 feet.

As the cold front moves in Thursday, the temperatures will drop by 10 to 15 degrees. The lows for most of this week will be in the 30s, though in South Lake Tahoe the National Weather Service is calling for a low of 27 on April 25.

Sun will return by the weekend, with highs returning to the 60s.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Reception for Stacy Hicks

Bona Fide Books will host an art reception for Sierra photographer and writer Stacy Hicks on May 5 from 5:30-7:30pm.

It will feature 16 black and white images from her collection “What Remains”.

The event in Meyers is free.

Hicks, who lives in Strawberry, says that her photographs reveal the things that people often don’t see, and this is what she finds most interesting in her subjects.

Hicks also contributed to “Tahoe Blues: Short Lit on Life at the Lake”, a book about life at Lake Tahoe featuring local writers that will come out June 8 from Bona Fide Books.

Hicks’ work will be on display at Bona Fide Books May 1-27. Bona Fide HQ is located at 1069 Magua Street, No. 4, behind the Getaway Café in Meyers.

For more information, contact Kim Wyatt at editor@bonafidebooks.com.

Soroptimists looking for designer of next wine poster

Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe is looking for artists to design the 2012 poster for the annual wine tasting.

The original art piece should be 11 x 17, with theme being Tahoe and Wine Tasting.

The artwork will become the property of SISLT and will be used for advertising the event.

Drop off entries at Elevate Wellness Center, 1113 Emerald Bay Road, weekdays between 10am-6pm by June 11.

The inning artist receives $250 and two tickets to the event.

For information, email gina@elevate-wellness.com or call (530) 541.9355.

Food safety impacting wildlife, water quality

By Dan Charles, NPR

We'd probably like to think that clean, safe food goes hand in hand with pristine nature, with lots of wildlife and clean water. But in the part of California that grows a lot of the country's lettuce and spinach, these two goals have come into conflict.

Environmental advocates say a single-minded focus on food safety has forced growers of salad greens to strip vegetation from around their fields, harming wildlife and polluting streams and rivers.

The heart of this conflict is the Salinas Valley, on California's central coast. And my guide to the valley, on this beautiful spring day, is Daniel Mountjoy, an ecologist with a nonprofit organization called Sustainable Conservation. "I just love the drive down through here," Mountjoy says, as we head southeast from Castroville, the self-proclaimed "Artichoke Center of the World."

We can see mountains to the east and the west, but the valley itself, miles wide, is as flat as high-tech field-leveling machines could make it. The Salinas River meanders down the

middle of the valley, visible as a thicket of trees.

But most of what we see, though, is mile after mile of fields. Some are bare, ready for planting, others with rows of green leaves just emerging from brown dirt. This is one of the country's biggest sources of fresh lettuce and spinach. It's often called America's salad bowl.

And for the past 40 years, this valley has been the scene of a struggle to find a balance between some of the most intensive farming in the world and what's left of nature.

When Mountjoy first came here, as a student, almost 40 years ago, farming had already taken over.

"One of my professors brought us out on a field trip," he recalls. This scientist had invented some of the first chemical herbicides that farmers used to kill off weeds. "He was very proud of the fact that farmers had been able to eliminate and restrict all noncrop vegetation from the farms, and pointed out that you could tell a good farm from a bad farm by that fact that, from fence post to fence post, the only thing that was growing was the crop."

Mountjoy, though, found it bleak. Ecologically, it was impoverished. There was barely any food or shelter for insects, or the birds that feed on them, or bigger animals that need even more space.

Also, when it rained, soil and fertilizer washed straight into drainage ditches, streams, and the Monterey Bay.

Mountjoy became part of a movement to change that. He went to work for the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It's the arm of the USDA that promotes environmental quality. And for almost 20 years, part of his job was encouraging farmers in this valley to create a greener, more diverse landscape.

Read the whole story

Victims’ right crowd captivated by Dugard kidnapping story

By Guy Kovner, Press Democrat

Terry Probyn came home late from her second job and stepped outside her home in Riverside to gaze at a large, bright full moon on the night of Aug. 23, 2009.

“OK, Jaycee, where the hell are you?” Probyn called out, continuing a dialogue with her daughter, Jaycee Lee Dugard, who had been kidnapped 18 years earlier.

That same night, 420 miles to the north, Dugard had “an uncontrollable desire” to look up at the moon from the backyard of a convicted sex offender’s house in Antioch.

“It was full and it made her think of me,” Probyn said.

Three days later, Dugard and the two daughters she had during her captivity were freed from the clutches of Phillip Garrido, who is now serving a 431-year prison sentence for kidnapping, rape and false imprisonment.

Probyn, 53, held a crowd of about 300 people spellbound Tuesday in Santa Rosa as she recounted the “18 hellish years” of separation from Dugard, who at age 11 was snatched from a South Lake Tahoe street on June 10, 1991 in one of California’s most notorious kidnappings.

Probyn was the guest speaker at a Sonoma County Crime Victims' Rights Week event at the Family Justice Center on Mendocino Avenue.

It was just the second time she had told her story in a public setting, Probyn said.

Read the whole story

O'Rourke looking at job in Washington; Medford off the table

By Mark Morey, Yakima Herald-Republic

YAKIMA, Wash. – A last-minute withdrawal won't disrupt Yakima's search for a city manager.

The City Council on Tuesday quickly moved to slot in another candidate after assistant administrator Marianna Marysheva-Martinez of Mammoth Lakes withdrew late Monday.



Tony O'Rourke

Replacing her as a finalist is Anthony O'Rourke, manager of South Lake Tahoe, since 2010. He started his local government

career as a community development director in Isla Vista, Calif., in 1977, according to his resume.

Yakima Mayor Micah Cawley said O'Rourke had been under consideration by the council previously, but he opted not to join the final process announced earlier this month because he was already talking with another city. When that deal in Medford, Ore., did not come together, O'Rourke said he would be available to interview with Yakima, Cawley said.

Read the whole story

Guilty verdict rendered in killing of Placerville principal

By Carlos Alcalá, Sacramento Bee

Placerville residents saw a measure of swift justice Tuesday, as John Luebbers was convicted of first-degree murder in the 2011 shooting of popular school principal Sam LaCara.

Staff members and parents from Louisiana Schnell Elementary School, where LaCara, 50, was principal, shared tearful hugs after the verdict was read.

"He was a good man," Kara Tracy, an instructional aide at Schnell, said of LaCara.

Tracy was happy for the verdict, but said, "I don't think it does any justice. It doesn't bring Sam back."

The guilty verdict was the culmination of a sudden end to

Luebbers’ trial.

The prosecution rested its case as soon as court was in session Tuesday and the defense attorney elected not to present any evidence or testimony, later saying it was not in his client’s best interests.

Read the whole story